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ABSTRACT

This project report describes the historical research completed for the writing of one of the few single-volume books dealing with modern Serbian history that gives a complete and detailed analytical survey of the past history and its influence on present day Yugoslavia. The two-fold theme of modern Serbian history is: 1) the impact of modernization and external influence upon the political, social, economic and cultural development; and, 2) re-establishment of this nation as a participating member of the European Community. The author bases his research on selected works written in English, Serbian, and other languages. Aware of the need to screen out misconceptions and national and Marxist bias found in existing works, he strives for an objective point of view. The findings include a brief summary of this history with the table of contents of the forthcoming book appended. (SJM)

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FINAL REPORT

Contract No. OEC-0-70-3986 (823)

A HISTORY OF MODERN SERBIA, 1804-1918

SB 001 997

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September 1971

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

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Summary

A History of Modern Serbia, 1804-1918 is an analytical survey of the history of Serbia from its struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1804 to its inclusion, in 1918, into the newly created Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later called Yugoslavia).

The immediate purpose of the work is to make up for the lack of any such recent scholarly survey in English or in any other major Western language.

The work is designed especially to provide a useful aid to students of East European history as well as to all who are interested in the historical background of an important part of Yugoslavia.

The work surveys not only the political history of modern Serbia but it contains sections devoted to the social, economic, and cultural development of Serbia. The main theme of the work is the rapid modernization and integration into the community of European nations of a re-emerging nation whose development had been cut off from the mainstream of European civilization by the Turkish invasion and retarded through over four centuries of political repression and economic exploitation under a culturally alien rule.

In writing this work, the author has attempted to apply the best of both Yugoslav and other European and American scholarly work on the subject.

Introduction

There is a serious dearth of books in English or, for that matter, in other Western languages that survey the history of East European countries. This scarcity is in marked contrast with the respectable volume of highly professional books and articles which especially American scholars in this field have been publishing on specific topics of a monographic nature. Thus a gap has developed between the specialists and not only beginning students in this field, but also students, teachers, and even scholars in the field of general European history. Good up-to-date survey histories of various East European countries are needed to bridge this gap. Especially with regard to the Balkan lands, most of the existing survey histories are either out-dated and out-of-print or biased.

There is a particular need for a substantial and up-to-date survey of the history of modern Serbia. The only general survey of Serbian history in English in one volume, H.W.V. Temperley's History of Serbia

(London and New York, 1917), was published during the First World War. It has been the standard item in English on the subject ever since, even though it laid no claim to scholarship and was written by an Englishman who, however talented and knowledgeable, was unable to make use of Serbian scholarship because he could not read the language. The situation is not much better with respect to other major languages; indeed, in most cases it is worse. Thus, unless one knows Serbo-Croatian, anyone interested in reading Serbian history beyond Temperley's volume must resort to brief encyclopedic summaries or else wade through scattered journal articles and a very few monographs which are limited in scope. Few readers have the time, the bibliographical knowledge, or even the available supply of journals and books for this purpose. This problem is particularly acute, of course, for students of European history at the college level, but it confronts anyone who is seriously interested in the subject. It should also be pointed out that, oddly enough, there is no single one-volume survey of modern Serbian history even in the Serbo-Croatian language, though there are several multi-volume works. The closest thing to a one-volume history, Vaso Čubrilović's Istorija političke misli u Srbiji XIX veka (Belgrade, 1958) is, as its title indicates, devoted solely to the development of political thought. The only single volume in any language that surveys the history of modern Serbia is in Greek -- the very substantial work by Dimitrije Djordjević published in Thessaloniki in 1970 under the title Ἱστορία τῆς Σερβίας 1800-1918.

Another major problem connected with the available material in English and other major European languages concerning Serbia's history is that the greatest emphasis has been placed on political history, particularly diplomatic history, while social, economic, and cultural history have been relatively neglected. An important reason for the attention given to diplomatic history, apart from the inherent importance of Serbia's place in Great Power politics, is the fact that so many of the available sources are in the Western languages. Nevertheless, until relatively recently even native Serbian scholars have stressed political history at the expense of social, economic, and cultural history, with a very few exceptions. Only since the Second World War, thanks in large part to the influence of Marxism, have Yugoslav scholars begun on any scale to work on the non-political aspects of their history.

There is a particular reason why American and other Western scholars should be interested in both the political and non-political aspects of modern Serbian history. One of the great phenomena of world history in our own time has been the emergence of the "new" nations of Africa and Asia and their integration into the modern world. These are, for the most part, countries whose populations have long lived under

foreign rule, who have been politically passive and even oppressed, who have been economically exploited, and whose culture has remained at a primitive level. With the rise of their own nationalism and their attainment of political independence, these countries are in the process of undergoing a profound and disturbing transformation under the pressures of surviving in a modern world. They are discovering that political independence is not in itself the solution to their problems but only a partial prerequisite for a solution, and that while independence solves some problems, it creates others. Modern Serbia offers a very instructive example of a country which, though European, has traversed a similar path in modern times. Once a proud kingdom and even an empire in medieval times, Serbia was overrun by an invasion of Asian Turks in the fourteenth century and was ruled as a conquered province of the Ottoman Empire for over four centuries. These Moslem conquerors were a culturally alien force. Their empire was based on military conquest and economic exploitation. Their political system was based on an institutionalized discrimination against their non-Moslem subjects. Their rule deprived Serbia not only of its political independence but of its customary ties with the rest of European civilization. It also resulted in the retardation and barbarization of Serbia's culture, for though the Turks themselves were far from being barbarians, their non-Moslem subjects found it almost impossible to maintain their own cultural development under the conditions of their servitude. If Serbian native culture survived, it was because its remnants were forced to draw in on themselves within the protective confines of a sub-culture that was so primitive that simple literacy almost disappeared. Then, thanks to a variety of internal and external factors, in the beginning of the nineteenth century the people of Serbia were able to rise up against Ottoman rule and to achieve first autonomy and then complete independence. The basic theme of Serbia's history in the nineteenth century is how this re-emerged nation established itself as a constituent part of the European community of nations to which it had originally belonged and how it developed its political institutions, its society, economic system and cultural life under the pressures of modernization and foreign influences.

The study of Serbia's modern history can serve the Western reader in another way. It can correct several possible misconceptions.

One of these, which has gained in circulation since the Second World War thanks to the expansion of Soviet domination, is that the countries of Eastern Europe somehow naturally and historically belong to the Russian sphere. The study of Serbia's modern history shows that while Serbia had both political and cultural relations with Russia, it was bound to an even greater degree to the countries of Central and Western Europe in its politics, economics, and even culture. Throughout its long history, both medieval and modern Serbia stood between East and West.

Another popular misconception is that the peoples of Eastern Europe never knew what democracy was and were therefore naturally given to totalitarian forms of government. As far as Serbia is concerned, the Serbian people had their own institutions of local self-government even under the Ottoman régime, while after Serbia attained independence, the constitutions of Serbia compared favorably with those of far more advanced European states. While political democracy in nineteenth-century Serbia was far from perfect, its existence was facilitated by the fact that Serbia's society was more homogeneous than that of more advanced countries in that the differences between its socio-economic classes were less developed. Besides, one of the most durable results of the Ottoman conquest was that Serbia had no native aristocracy in modern times.

Another insight to be gained from a study of Serbia's modern history is to understand the depth and strength of Serbian nationalism, which is not only political but cultural. It is generally conceded that one of the most serious problems in Yugoslavia today is national rivalry among the various nationalities of that country, even under a supposedly international ideology such as Communism. A study of modern Serbian history shows that the ideal of a Greater Serbia was older and deeper than the ideal of Yugoslav unity. The fact that the people of Serbia are but a part of the Serbian nation as a whole, and by no means the larger partm and that Serbia has played the historical role of a Serbian Piedmont or center of Serbian unification, is important in comprehending the position of the Serbs in Yugoslavia today. In a time of heightened national tensions in Yugoslavia, it is vital to note that the Serbs form the largest single ethnic group in three of Yugoslavia's six constituent republics -- Serbia, Bosnia-Hercegovina, and Montenegro -- and a sizeable minority of long standing in a fourth -- Croatia.

Methods

The basic task of the author was to find, toselect, and to render into a single cohesive narrative the best existing literature on Serbia's modern history. This included both traditional and new works, Serbian and non-Serbian, and works written from different points of view. The selection was made on the basis of the author's acquaintance with the literature gained in the course of a quarter-century of research in this field. The author's work was facilitated by the fact that though he is a native American whose education has been wholly American, he has an almost native knowledge of the Serbo-Croatian language, thanks to his Serbian and Croatian ancestry. Moreover, he has been in Yugoslavia numerous times and for extended periods ever since he served in the American Military Mission to Yugoslavia during the Second World War.

The author's task was also facilitated by the experience which he gained in writing two previous works. The first is an extensive survey of Serbian historiography entitled Modern Serbian Historians which has been accepted for publication by the University of Wisconsin Press. The second work is entitled Yugoslavia: A Bibliographic Guide, and is being published by the Library of Congress, which commissioned its writing. A high percentage of the approximately 3500 items described in this work deal with Serbian history.

There were several methodological problems which the author faced in writing this work. The most serious one comes from the fact that despite the vastness of the available literature on Serbian history, there are still many areas which have not yet been sufficiently explored. These include especially social and economic history. For example, the only available survey of Serbia's economic history, Nikola Vučo's Privredna istorija Srbije do Prvog svetskog rata (Belgrade, 1955), is, despite its usefulness, far from an adequate treatment of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. As for Serbia's social history, no one has attempted to write the kind of survey for other period that the late Tihomir Djordjević did for the reign of Prince Miloš Obrenović almost fifty years ago. Before a truly comprehensive history of modern Serbia can be written, the scholars in these and other neglected fields must produce more research and then write syntheses. Thus, quite apart from its own faults, the present work will necessarily reflect the inadequacies of the existing literature.

It must also be understood that much of the available literature in Serbo-Croatian suffers from a particular bias. Earlier works have often been influenced by Serbian nationalism, while more recent works frequentl reflect a Marxist outlook. On the other hand, especially earlier non-Serbian accounts suffer not only from a certain bias but from superficiality and insufficient acquaintance with the subject. It is pleasant to report that the more recent works, both Serbian and non-Serbian, are far superior in this respect. Among Serbian works the nationalism is less strident and the Marxism is less dogmatic, while among non-Serbian works the level of scholarship has greatly improved. The latter is particularly true of American works in this field. However, these most recent works are a small part of the whole. It has been the author's particular task to prepare a text which is specifically meant for an American and Western audience. This has forced the author to present his material in a way which is suitable for the educated reader who may know little or nothing about the subject. It has also enabled him to present that account in the light of his own viewpoint. This viewpoint is neither Serbian nationalist nor Marxist. It has been the constant concern of the author to borrow and to use the

best of the available Serbian and non-Serbian scholarship while avoiding the biases of others as much as possible.

One of the most serious problems in writing such a work is to decide what audience one is addressing, as this affects the entire presentation of the material. This project is part of an effort to provide better educational materials for all who are interested in international studies. The author has chosen, therefore, to write this work for the educated layman and student of world history and foreign affairs who has no knowledge of the history of Serbia and who cannot read the Serbo-Croatian language. For this reason there are no footnotes to the text, since they would be useless to such readers as well as cumbersome in so general a survey. As for the text itself, the author believes that a survey of this wort, being the only one of its kind is any major language, should be fairly complete and detailed. The author's aim was to provide a book of substantial size that would stand for some time as a standard work until a better one came along.

This work has been written from the vantage point of one who is seeking to examine the inner development of Serbia rather than its external place in the world of international affairs. While foreign affairs have been treated substantially, the author has dealt with them as they affected Serbia itself. As for Serbia's domestic history, the author has given the most attention to political and constitutional history, having in mind the problem of a newly emerging nation which finds itself compelled to establish a whole new system of self-government. However, this work also lends unusually extensive space to social, economic, and cultural history. This is in keeping with the aim of describing the modernization of an economically undeveloped and culturally retarded primitive agrarian society. Among the growing literature on the general problem of modernization, the author has found especially useful and suggestive the work by Professor Cyril E. Black, The Dynamics of Modernization: A Study in Comparative History (New York: Harper & Row, 1967).

Findings and Analysis

1. Though the Serbian medieval state was extinguished by the Ottoman invasion, along with the feudal lords that ruled over it, the Serbian nation continued to exist as to preserve a consciousness of its own identity. This was made possible thanks both to Ottoman policy and Serbian inner resources. Ottoman policy divided the subject peoples of the Empire into millets or ethnic groups based on religious affiliation, and it gave such groups a certain measure of self-rule. For the Ottoman rulers this system had these advantages: it preserved order, it furthered a system of conscious discrimination between the Moslem élite

and non-Moslem subjects, and it facilitated the gathering of taxes. For the Serbs this policy made possible their own national preservation, thanks especially to the continued existence of a national church (the Serbian Orthodox), local institutions of self-government, and a Serbian folk culture whose highest expression was its oral tradition as transmitted in epic poetry.

2. One of the most baneful results of the Ottoman invasion was the retardation and barbarization of Serbian society. This occurred with the destruction of the Serbian medieval state and the disappearance of the class of feudal lords whose wealth and tastes maintained the high culture of that state. On the other hand, the reversion of Serbian society to the more primitive social institutions of a peasant society helped to preserve the Serbian people as an ethnic identity with a common sub-culture within the Ottoman Empire. Notable among these institutions was the clan and the zadruga or extended family unit.

3. Though the Serbian insurrection of 1804 against the Turks took place in the period of the French Revolution and the rise of nationalism everywhere in Europe during the Napoleonic era, that insurrection owed far less to that influence than to other factors. The Serbs already had a strong sense of national identity, thanks to the preservation of their own institutions and to an Ottoman system in which they were made constantly aware of their separateness. The chief external factors that made possible the Serbian insurrection were the decline of the Ottoman state and the Austrian and Russian wars against that state in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Beginning as a peasant uprising against an oppressive economic system, the Serbian insurrection was transformed into a national revolution for political independence. The success of the political revolution was not immediately complete, for Serbia gained only its autonomy within the Ottoman Empire and had to wait until 1878 to gain full independence. However, the socio-economic revolution was achieved in that the Ottoman land tenure system was ended and the Turkish landowners were evicted from Serbia.

4. With the attainment of political autonomy and economic independence, Serbia was confronted with the problem of establishing new political, social, economic, and cultural institutions to fit a new kind of existence in the world of a rapidly changing modern Europe from which it had long been isolated. The very institutions which had preserved Serbian society -- the church, the clan and zadruga, political localism, and a primitive folk culture -- now were either inadequate to the new challenges or even reactionary in their effect. Chief among these new challenges was the need for a strong state and the pressures of a rising capitalist economy.

5. The chief transformations which marked the modernization of Serbia in the nineteenth century were the following:

A. Economic

1. The change from a self-sufficient natural economy to a money economy which depended increasingly on the market for certain commodities, especially manufactured goods.
2. The change from economic isolation to a growing commerce with foreign countries, especially the Austrian Empire.
3. The abandonment of the zadruga or extended family as an economic unit and of various forms of cooperation in favor of economic individualism and a competitive system which led to a sharper differentiation between haves and have-nots.
4. The rapid transition from a simple primitive economy to a complex capitalist economy which brought with it a whole new structure of state regulations, credit institutions, joint stock companies, and so on.
5. The rise of industry, although this was a very slow and tardy process in Serbia.
6. The development of modern communications and roads.
7. The increasingly dominant economic position of the towns.

B. Social

1. The change from a fairly homogeneous peasant society based largely on social equality to an increasingly differentiated, stratified society of various classes and power structures whose interests often clashed.
2. Increasing urbanization and the rise of a bourgeoisie.
3. The decline of social collectivism and its institutions in favor of individualism and the accompanying atomization of society.
4. The sometimes gradual and often rapid abandonment of old mores for new, with a widening gulf between town and country.

C. Political

1. The change from the decentralized folk democracy of a submerged nation to a centralized monarchy.
2. The rise of the bureaucracy and an impersonal governing apparatus.
3. The rise of a standing army as distinct from the earlier folk concept of the armed people.
4. The decline of regionalism and localism in political life and the accompanying rise of national political parties.
5. The transition from a personal folk justice based on customary law to an impersonal court system based on legal codes largely borrowed from other countries.

6. The transition from an informal popular sovereignty to an institutionalized parliamentary system.
7. Serbia becomes an active factor in international politics in seeking its own national goals.

D. Cultural
1. The development of a modern high culture as a layer over the folk culture of the preceding four centuries.
2. The rapidly increasing influence of Western European culture (including the Russian) on Serbia's culture, thanks especially to the influx of Serbs from the Austrian Empire, who acted as the first bearers of European culture in modern Serbia.
3. The ascendancy of a native educated class which became distinct from and separated from the peasant masses.
4. The rise of mass public education, at least at the primary level.
5. The secularization of Serbia's culture once the state supplanted the church as the central institution of Serbian public life.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The present study was written specifically to fill a gap in the existing American and Western literature regarding the history of certain East European countries. The author hopes that he has demonstrated that a properly qualified scholar can complete such a survey history in about a year's time provided that he is freed from all other duties.

There is no question that there is a need fro more survey works concerning the history of other East European people. To give a few example, the only scholarly ruvey in any Western language to cover more than a century of Rumanian history is still R.W. Seton-Watson's A History of the Roumanians, which was published in 1934 and which ends with the First World War. The standard survey of Albanian history in English has long been C.A. Chekrezi's superficial work Albania Past and Present, which was published in 1919. There is a not generally available English translation of a native work, Kristo Frasheri's The History of Albania (A Brief Survey), published in Tirana in 1964, which is almost comically bad and propagandistic. The existing English surveys of Bulgarian history -- M. Macdermott's A History of Bulgaria 1393-1885, S.G. Evans' A Short History of Bulgaria, and a translation of an official Bulgarian text, A Short History of Bulgaria, by Kossev, Hristov and Angelov --- have all been justly criticized in a review by Professor James Clarke of the University of Pittsburgh for their tendentiousness, in addition to other faults and limitations. There is no substantial general survey

of modern Croatian or Slovenian history. One could go on with some of the other nationalities of Eastern Europe. On the other hand, there are qyalified scholars in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe who are perfectly capable of writing such works if they were given an opportunity.

There is the question tc what degree publishers will be willing to accept books of this kind which may have a limited appeal and which may be costly to produce. It is more than likely that such books, insofar as they become standard items, will sell over a period of some years, but this does not help the publisher with his more immediate financial considerations. This is where the proposed effort of a group such as the Committee on East-Central and Southeast European Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies to subsidize such works will be of paramount importance.

Meanwhile it is to be hoped that the Office of Education and perhaps other government and private agencies will support the writing of such books. East European studies (as distinct from Russian and Soviet studies) are still a neglected area in our educational system. It is not enough to train area specialists in this field. A greater effort should be made to bring a knowledge of this area to the general student population, in general history courses, and to the public at large. It is interesting to recall that when George Kennan became United States ambassador to Yugoslavia a few years ago, he so felt the need for a general survey of Yugoslav history that he engaged himself and the whole embassy staff to write such a volume for themselves. Apparently they never finished the project, or at least it has never seen the light of day. It is a pity that they felt compelled to embark on such a task. It should have been done by others long ago.

Present State of the Manuscript and Future Plans

1. As of mid-September 1971 there is a completed manuscript consisting of an original and a carbon copy, entitled A History of Modern Serbia, 1804-1918. It consists of 5163 pages of typed double-spaced text arranged in eleven chapters. A table of contents is appended to this report.

2. Three internationally recognized specialists in the field of Balkan and specifically Yugoslav history have been asked to review the manuscript. They are Dr. Dimitrije Djordjević of the University of California (Santa Barbara), Dr. Charles Jelavich of Indiana University, and Dr. Wayne S. Vucinich of Stanford University. All are professors of History. Whenever they complete their critiques, the author will make whatever revisions are deemed desirable. It is hoped that this can be done by January 1972.

3. The manuscript is being submitted for first consideration to the publishing firm of Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich Inc. of New York City. The president of the firm, Mr. William Jovanovich, is personally acquainted with the interest which the Committee on East-Central and Southeast European Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies has in seeing more works published in this area. His company has already published some works in this field,including several that have been translated by the writer of this report. The director of the University of Wisconsin Press, Mr. Thompson Webb Jr., has also indicated a willingness to consider the manuscript. The University of Wisconsin Press has already accepted for publication a manuscript by the author on Modern Serbian Historians.

4. It is assumed, both in view of the nature and the size of the present work, that a subsidy will be required to permit its publication. As soon as the publisher indicates his acceptance of the work, a request will be submitted to the Committee on East-Central and Southeast European Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies for a suitable grant.

5. As soon as the work is typed in its revised form, the author will submit a file copy to the Office of Education. Once the book is in print, the author will supply the Office of Education with the required number of copies.

6. The author is aware of the copyright arrangements which he must make with the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC).

APPENDIX A

A HISTORY OF MODERN SERBIA, 1804-1918

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